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LAURELS

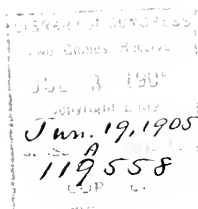
LAURELS

—BY—

LAURA B. PAYNE

Lo the morning breaks!
Be up and ready for the day.

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LAURA B. PAYNE



Let peace and love thy life control,
And brood like doves above thy soul,
Until its symphonies unroll,
Re-echoing songs of heaven.
Embrace today to hope and pray;
Let cares go on with yesterday—
Sunshine and joy be thine alway.

MEMORIES AND HOPE

I watch the leaves of autumn
As slowly down they fall,
And they make me think of a vanished form
Now gone beyond recall.

I watch the Spring day flowers
And hear the bird notes sung,
And think of one I learned to love
When the Spring was fair and young.

I walk the streets, times often
Alone mid the busy throng,
And peer into each eager face
As it swiftly moves along;

Aye, scan their anxious faces,
I know not hardly why;
But it seems as if I might see him
Among the passers-by.

Sometimes in field or woodland
I think alone to roam,
And hold communion with my God
Beneath fair Nature's dome;

But with the swaying breezes,
And the brooklet's murmuring tone,
There comes a voice that seems to say,
"Think not you are alone."

Sometimes I watch the dancers
As they move to music's chime,
And I catch a glimpse of a face most dear,
I knew in a former time,

That sets my pulses thrilling,
And dizzy turns my head;
But, then, I know it is not he,
For they tell me he is dead.

Yet the likeness sets me thinking
Of a ballroom in the past,
Where we whirled through the mazy dance
In bliss too sweet to last.

To church sometimes on Sundays
I take my weary way,
To hear the organ's solemn notes,
And with the people pray;

Then, while the mighty anthems
Make saddest souls rejoice,
I listen, for it seems to me
I hear a well-known voice.

Sometimes around the old hearthstone
We meet at Christmastide—
The brothers, sisters, parents, all
Now scattered far and wide,

And always when I look around
Upon that circle gay
My heart aches at the vacant seat
By me on Christmas day.

Sometime I'll cross the river,
And join the mighty throng,
And help them sing the chorus
In accents sweet and strong;

And when the organ's pealing,
My soul will then rejoice;
For I shall not be mistaken—
I know I'll hear your voice.

And some time over yonder
We'll meet at Christmastide
The children and the parents
And loved ones true and tried;

And in that family circle
There'll be no vacant seat;
No hearts will then be aching,
For life will be complete.

ALL THINGS FOR THE BEST

I believe in the power of right to conquer wrong,
In the potency of prayer, thanksgiving and song,
That the Springtime waiteth nigh, tho' Winter lingers
long,
And each grief finds consolation.

I know there is a power allwise, omnipotent,
Who holds within His hands the reins of government,
Administering the laws of reward and punishment,
Of just dues and compensation.

All things for righteousness and justice make,
Or else the universe is one supreme mistake,
And on its reefs each struggling soul will break
To ruin and destruction.

But the inner self will not, cannot, have it, so
It marches on to weal and not to woe,
The beneficence of love to win and to bestow,
The glory of all life revealing.

THE DEATH IN THE COTTAGE

I passed by the door of a cottage

Where a woman lay dying, they said,
Of a fever brought on by starvation

While not able to work for her bread.
Three children sat weeping beside her—

Pale, pinched little faces they bore,
And tatters and rags soiled and grimy
Were the clothing the little things wore.

'Tis said that grim Death, the much-dreaded,

Comes alike to the rich and the poor,
That all with his gloom is enshrouded
Wherever he enters the door;

But wealth robes its corpse in fine raiment
And ladens with flowers the rich tomb,
While poverty wraps a coarse mantle
And buries wherever there's room.

A few people stopped by the doorway
And looked on the sorrowful scene,
With grief tugging hard at their heartstrings,

For all are not hardened and mean,
And some seemed anxious to aid her
As stifled and short grew her breath.
Ah, how we are touched and softened
In the terrible presence of death!

I thought as I stopped and pondered
This last and most pitiful scene

In the miserable life of a woman,
Of all that it really did mean.

It means there are hundreds, aye, thousands,
No matter how much they may try,
Who cannot afford here a being,
Neither can they afford to die.

Not able to work, they told me;
Belonged to no order, she'd said;
Not able to pay the dues monthly,
And the husband and father was dead.
The groceryman and the landlord
Had worried her with their bills
Until she had grown unconscious,
For this is the grief that kills.

Oh, where will they lay her poor body?
Who'll plant a sweet flower on her grave,
And who will reach out a hand kindly
Her three little children to save?
O God! if it be that the angels
O'er the earth their kind vigils keep,
Methinks that such scenes by them witnessed
Would cause even angels to weep.

How long, O how long, I do wonder,
Will a system so foul still obtain
That makes him or her the earth's chosen
Who only full coffers can gain;
That gives to the few all the houses,
The silver, the gold and the lands,
And turns out the millions as paupers,
To sink in life's awful quicksands?

A system that's founded on hatred,
That makes every brother a foe;
And kindles the fires of hell's kingdom
In this beautiful world below;
That leaves to starvation a sister
Like her of whom we have said
Lay dying within a poor cottage,
While her children were famished for bread?

I WILL

When the day is dark and the clouds hang low,
Declare to yourself, I will.
When look where you may, you behold the foe,
Just boldly assert, I will.
For away out yonder is stationed your goal;
The path to it climbs the hill.
Yet nothing can keep that goal from you
If only you say, I will.

The man is lost who will say, I can't.
That word is a weight on his soul.
It weakens his nature, dwarfs his will
And stands between him and his goal;
But he who affirms without fear of defeat
That his purposes shall not fail
Will find that the clouds will disappear
And his ship will weather the gale.

The mountain he thought loomed up so high
Was only a little hill,
And the terrors that made his heart afraid
Had vanished before his will.
So reach your hand, if your cause is just,
To Him who has power to fulfill
Every wish of yours, and bring your own
To accord with His infinite will.

A WOMAN'S PRAYER

A woman pale, at close of day,
Knelt where a dying baby lay,
And prayed to God to spare her child

From hunger's torture fierce and wild,
O Christ, thou who didst love the poor,
Come near, I pray, my humble door;
Thou who didst make the water wine,
From fish and loaf bid thousands dine,
Give bread this day to me and mine.

For days and days my weary feet
Have trudded about from street to street,
Where I have begged for work, not bread,
Until my heart sank down like lead,
And oft I wished that I were dead.
A hundred times the angry frown
Of employer has cast me down,
And empty-handed, sick and sore
I've sought again my hovel door.

I've seen my children, once so hale,
From want of food grow thin and pale.
And now, as fades the waning light,
My darling's soul goes home tonight.
O God, is it for this we're born,
To tread the winepress, sad, forlorn,
And in a land of greed and gold
Starve as the felons did of old?

There is no famine in the land;
Vast riches from thy loving hand
Are poured out lavishly each day,
Yet he must want who cannot pay.
Pay who? Not Thee, O Lord, not Thee.
Are not Thy bounties full and free?
Pay those who claim the land and gold,
While millions of Thy children slave
Or beg for that Thou freely gave.

They say this is a Christian land,
And church spires rise up tall and grand,

While hosts of people meet to pray
And praise Thee every Sabbath day.
Yet e'en within the sacred shade
Of chapel dome dire want is laid
With viselike grip on youth and age,
Until we find our printed page
Becomes a record sheet of crime,
Despite Thy life and words sublime.

O God! if it be true that right
Shall triumph and at last make might,
Then let earth's wrongs be swept away
And righteousness shine in like day.
Forbid that ere the sun should rise
On starving babes and weeping eyes,
Where mothers, bent with aching head,
Beg for a chance to toil for bread,
While greed shuts up his shriveled soul
And takes the world in full control.

Thus Christian mothers kneel and pray,
While misery gnaws the heart away,
And travesties on Christian love
Make angels weep who watch above.
But lift your eyes, O child of earth!
For righteousness hath here had birth,
And nature from her thousand hills
Cries out against all human ills;
With gentle speech she'll check each sigh
And wipe the tears from every eye;
Soothe every pain, drive out all care,
And answer every heartfelt prayer.

TODAY

Be happy today while the sky is bright
And the birds are singing with cheerful delight.
Let the smiles of contentment your face adorn,
For the world is too full of the sad and forlorn.
Let songs of rejoicing pour forth from your soul
And symphonies grand ever heavenward roll.
Chant not a dirge as you journey along,
But make the world ring with life's beautiful song.

Be generous today with your love and gold,
While the suffering millions of young and old
Are reaching their eager hands for bread
And sighing for words that are never said;
Words of affection and sweet tenderness,
Touches of hands in the gentle caress;
Give, oh, give freely these gems of great worth,
Of which this old world has had so much dearth.

Be gentle today with the wayworn and sad,
Who footsore and weary, hungry and halfclad,
Come timidly knocking upon your back door,
Begging even the crumbs from your dining-room floor.
Remember they're human, they suffer and feel
Pangs which perhaps they now seek to conceal.

Grieve not for the heathen in faraway lands,
Among China's millions or on Afric's hot sands,
But in sympathy sweet, oh, list to the plaint
Of the one at your door, be he sinner or saint,
And do not withhold the crust nor the cup,
But bid him come in to rest and to sup.

Be hopeful today for the final success
Of the good in the world to conquer distress;

For if it be true that our thoughts are things,
Then let them bear out on their snowy white wings
Rich burdens of love and hope and delight,
That will bring back the fruit on their homeward flight,
To brighten earth's hills and desolate plains
And fill all the land with love's peaceful refrains.

Then let us be happy today and try
To live for the now, not the bye and bye.
For if in life's drama we act our part well
We need have no fears of the torments of hell.
Today is the day of salvation, oh, friend,
The day to do right, the day to amend,
The day to find heaven about you lying,
To know that you're saved without waiting or dying.

The day to commune with the saints over there,
The day you may realize answer to prayer,
The great day of judgment when sentence is passed
And the sheep and the goats appear in contrast;
The day that the soul may find happy release
And rejoice in a heaven of infinite peace,
By casting out sorrow, Satan and sin,
And bidding pure love rule the kingdom within.

IN THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS

I went down the Valley of Shadows,
Where the darkness of sickness lay,
The sun seemed hid by the mountains,
And I thought it would never come day.
Thick forests and marshy swamplands
Spread round me on every side,
Where I felt as if venomous reptiles
In dark recesses might hide.

But is this all I saw in the valley?

Ah, no! strange lights beamed round me ofttimes
And I saw, instead of this region

Most healthful and beautiful climes.
The lights seemed to come from the ocean
Of radiant, infinite light,
And for a few moments would scatter
The clouds of that hideous night.

And in that Valley of Shadows

I found I was never alone,
For oft when the way was darkest,
My loved ones who long had been gone
Would come forth out of the stillness
And silently walk by my side.
We talked, but our language was voiceless
As thoughts on life's limitless tide.

I never had known till that journey
Down into the Valley of Death,
Where the fever gripped my vitals—
Almost stilled my heated breath—
How close they lie together—
This world and that one there—
How the shadows that darken this one
Burst forth into beauty there.

So closely lie these countries,

And so nearly are they one,
That when I walked in silence
That vale without a sun,
My kindred souls from both worlds
Most sweet communion found
As they worked and prayed together
On one common meeting ground.

They have borne me from the Valley,
On the golden waves of Love,

And I thank my blessed angels—
Those on earth and those above.
But I know they dwell together
Where the two worlds interblend,
And upon love's shining ladder
Everlastingly ascend.

MEDITATION

I know that as long as I live
In this land where the teardrops flow
That angels will hold my hand
In my wanderings to and fro—
That no day can be so dark
But a light on me will fall;
No night so full of pain
But that love will sweeten all.
Though the road be strewn with thorns
Over which my feet must tread,
And the goal of my earthly life
Seems the earning of daily bread;
Yet the thorns will wither away,
And roses for me will bloom,
And above earth's sordid gains
The goal of my quest will loom.
Earth has no sorrow so great
As to crush me with utter despair;
No burden it can impose
That I am unable to bear;
For I know that my bark must touch
Every dark or shimmering shore—
Must learn to anchor safe,
Be calm mid its breakers' roar.

And e'en when I tread the vale
Where death leads down to the grave,
With joy I shall hail that day,
And palms of victory wave;
For I know that the waves of life
On a fairer shore will break
When I lay this body down
And to heavenly splendor wake.

O God! let me thank Thee now
For the lessons of the past;
For the long and rugged road
Now winding home at last
Among the peace crowned heights
Where flowers forever bloom
And songs of gladness ring,
Dispelling fear and gloom.

TRUSTING

When winds and waves are raging
Through every threadbare sail,
And my bark seems all unlikely
To stem the awful gale,
I drop my oars, am quiet,
And say: Let come what will,
All safe in the arms Infinite,
I know I'll be resting still.
E'en though my boat is stranded
And the wild waves dash me o'er,
I yet shall make my moorings
Upon some fairer shore;

Or if the worlds should crumble
And back to chaos fall
Serene, unhurt, undaunted,
I would triumph over all.

No matter where I wander—
On desert land or sea,
Or out and on for ages,
In the blue immensity,
I shall not be lost nor injured,
For the Father's hand will guide,
And within the love unfailing
I must evermore abide.

For since I'm part and parcel
Of the great Eternal Whole,
I'd as soon think God could perish
As that I could lose my soul;
Or that height or depth or distance
Or any powers that be
Could intercept the current
That bears my own to me.

The hand that guides the wild bird
Through trackless seas of air
To fields in sunny South lands
With matchless love and care
I know will guide my footsteps
In paths that are the best
In the only royal highway
To regions of the blest.

THE SOUL KNOWETH ITS OWN

I knew you when I met you—
Recognized your soul-lit face,

And the form—tall, straight and supple,
With its slender, manly grace.
Had you been already wedded
By ten thousand earthly ties,
Yet my soul would hold and claim you
For its own in paradise.

As the maiden by the seaside
Looks out o'er the tossing main
For the longed-for ship's returning,
That would bring her loved again,
So I've looked across life's desert—
'Cross its surging, restless sea,
For the ship of sea or desert
That would bring my own to me.

In my dreams I've stood beside you
On the sun-kissed hills of life,
Left all earthly cares behind me,
All the world's unfriendly strife,
And our souls have interblended
In a sweet, entrancing bliss!
In a union blessed by angels
"In one grand eternal kiss."

Today my soul's prophetic vision
Scans the realms of time and space,
Showing me that way out yonder
I shall meet you face to face;
That you'll know me at that meeting
By the joys of other days,
When we roamed in bliss together
Through the long Olamic days.

Lonely through earth life I've wandered,
And I thought you had not come

Down from those bright fields Elysian,
Through this saddened life to roam;
And my heart had grown so senseless
To the pleading tone of love
That I feared it ne'er would waken
Tho' you called me from above.

But, ah me! when first I saw you,
How my heart stood still with joy!
And I realized the power
Of a love time can't destroy;
Then I knew my soul was chastened
By the mighty fires of love;
That God's hand had sealed our union
At an altar high above.

In the grand eternal future
You shall know me as your own;
And may read the runic record
When your cares away are thrown,
Of two lives in one life blended
By the mighty powers that be,
And you'll love me, aye, and call me
As my soul calleth now for thee.

Out o'er hill and dale and mountain
Steals my soul away tonight,
Seeking through the mists and shadows,
Through the darkness and the light,
For its own, for thee, beloved,
Since no force hath power to keep
Soul from unto soul low calling.
"Deep from answering unto deep."

All the sounds of sweet sad music,
That so oft my soul o'erflow,
Are the memories of the age-long
Life with you where radiant glow

Gems of purest thought and music,
'Mongst the scenes of angel land,
Where we'll wander yet, my darling,
Heart to heart and hand in hand.

THE WAYFARER'S QUERY

O, what is the meaning of life,
With its endless routine of strife,
Its hopes and fears,
Disappointments and tears,
O what is the meaning of life.
The soul, how it sighs and sings!
Like a harp of ten thousand strings,
Like the moan of the sea
Or the rain on the lea,
The saddest of all sad things.

How we long always to be glad,
Yet oftenest we are sad;
For the joys that we crave
We are given a grave
With its heap of fresh dirt and a slab.

And, O how we long for love!
The completeness of life to prove:
How we stretch our hands
'Cross the weary lands
For the joys of the angels above!

Then tell me, O sage, if you can,
The why of life's intricate plan.
The sensitive soul,
O, its mysteries unroll;
Explain them, O sage, if you can.

A PICTURE OF FARM LIFE

I can never quite get over
 Bein' raised upon a farm,
And around that old log farmhouse
 There lingers many a charm;
So when the days grow shorter
 And a chill gets in the air,
I kinder have a longin'
 And a wishin' I was there.

I can ne'er forget my father
 When we lived on the farm,
And I trudged to the schoolhouse—
 (That schoolhouse has a charm).
How, when the day was rainy,
 Or it snowed, I'd see 'im come
A-gallopin' on Jacob,
 Our horse, to take me home.

Then when the day was ended,
 And the teacher turned us out,
We'd grab our shawls and buckets,
 Play tag, and sing and shout,
Until I'd hear my father
 Say: "Laura, come, let's go."
Then with me up behind him
 We'd go boundin' o'er the snow.

And when the horse went faster
 My father'd reach his arm
Right back and hold me to him
 All the way out to the farm,
And ne'er have I felt safer
 From fallin' or from harm,
Than when my father held me
 With his strong and lovin' arm.

And then those winter evenin's—

The supper and the games;

The marks made in the ashes

And called our sweethearts' names;

The tales told 'round the fireside,

The apples thawin' there,

The crackin' nuts and laughter,

Are remembrances most dear.

The Springtime with its flowers,

Its openin' buds and trees.

The Summer with its wheatfields,

Its clover and its bees;

And then the Autumn golden,

When apple, peach and pear,

Hung temptingly above us,

In abundance rich and rare.

These, and a thousand others

Are the blessin's and the charms

That meet and greet the children,

Who are raised upon the farms.

They're healthy and they're happy,

Their cheeks are full and pink;

Their minds are strong and active;

They have the power to think.

No, I never can get over

Bein' raised upon a farm;

And, if I had it in my power—

I'm sure 'twould do no harm—

I'd gather all poor children

Who in cities now reside,

And o'er this broad, fair country

Would scatter far and wide.

I'd take these millions acres

And turn 'em into farms,

With houses neat and roomy,
With horses, sheds and barns,
With implements for farmin',
And men to till the land,
That all who lived upon them
Great plenty could command.

Then all the sufferin' millions,
Of homeless and distressed,
Now crowded in large cities,
Pale, sickly and oppressed;
I'd snatch from out those hovels
Where hopelessly they dwell,
To fill these homes of comfort
And happiness compel.

'Twould do me good to see 'em
Standin' out among the trees,
Where the bobolinks were singin',
Where they'd feel the balmy breeze;
Where the sun could shine upon 'em
And each day bring forth its charm.
Oh, there's nothin' else like growin'
Up from childhood on the farm.

Whether in the cot or palace,
Wheresoe'er my footsteps roam,
'Mid life's scenes of joy or sorrow,
Comes a memory of that home,
And I know when these reflections
Bring their sweet and sacred charm,
I can never quite get over
Bein' raised upon a farm.

ROBBIE AND JIM

It was Thanksgiving Day in the morning.

The ground was all covered with sleet,
And two little children were standing

Halfclad in the slippery street.

Their faces were pinched and haggard;

Their figures were dwarfed by the cold,
And, while they in years were but children,
Each visage looked careworn and old.

"I should like to eat dinner in that house,"

Said Robbie to poor little Jim,

As he pointed toward a grand mansion

With a finger all bony and slim;

"I know they'll have turkey and good things,

'Cause yesterday evenin' quite late

I saw them a-bringin' the things in

As I waited beside the back gate.

"I was hungry and cold, and 'twas rainin'.

My papers hung here at my side,

For I felt too tired to sell 'em,

And so all the day had not tried.

A lady came where I was standin'

And told me to run on away,

But I said: 'Please, ma'am, I'm hungry;

I've had nothing to eat this whole day.

"Oh, will you not give me a penny

To buy just a morsel of bread,

For there's no one to love and feed me

Since dear pretty mamma is dead?"

But she said: 'Go 'long away with you!

I've nothing for beggars tonight.'

So then I crept home and found you, Jim,
And slept till the broad daylight."

"Robbie," spoke Jim, with a gesture,

"I can remember quite well
When papa and mamma were livin'
We had things awfully swell!
We lived in a neat pretty cottage,
Right up in the best of the town,
And our Thanksgivin' dinner, I tell you,
Was always done up brown.

"Then my papa somehow got to drinkin'

And soon our nice dwellin' was gone,
While all our silver and jewelry
My mamma had to pawn.

One night they came carryin' papa
All bleedin' and pale from a wound.
He died and then was buried
Way down in the cold damp ground.

"Then my mamma took to pinin',
Or that's what the neighbors said,
And one morn when I went to kiss her
She was dreadfully pale; yes, dead!
And while the snowdrops were fallin'
And the wind was a goin' oo, oo!
They took her off to the graveyard
And buried her away, too.

"Since then I've been selling papers
And runnin' on errands for bread,
But many's the time, dear Robbie,
I've gone hungry and cold to my bed.
And I was so lonely at night time
That I called for poor mamma, tho' dead,
Until I found you in the street there
And asked you to sleep in my bed.

"Now, just see here what I've been savin'
(Holding out a purse greasy and slim),
All to buy a Thanksgivin' dinner
For poor little Robbie and Jim.
Of course, they'll have turkey and good things
In that big, fine house 'cross the street,
But think, we'll have salted peanuts
And popcorn, just all we can eat.

"And if we have enough money
We'll call for a piece of mince pie.
Come, Robbie, and let us be goin'.
Won't that be a-livin' high?"
And his partner in sickness and hunger
He seized and hurried away,
To the joys so long anticipated,
Of a dinner on Thanksgiving Day.

Now, the story of these little children
Is the story of human life—
A tale of troubles and heartaches,
Of struggles in earth's weary strife.
The woman within the grand mansion
Represents that class who today
Oppress and defraud the masses,
And then hypocritically pray

That God will have mercy on them,
And save them from Satan and Sin
And open the doors of His kingdom
To let the poor sufferers in.
But the Christ lifted up the fallen,
And healed the lame and the blind,
And taught the wonderful lessons
Of how to heal body and mind.

He reached out his hand to the children,
Bidding them to be happy and whole,

And said: "Of such is the Kingdom
Of Heaven," the infolded soul.
In this world there are many urchins
Like poor little Robbie and Jim,
But does anyone think to liken
The Kingdom of Heaven to them?

LOVE

O Love divine, from portals high
Descend on us this day;
Light up our pathway here below
With thy transcendent ray;
Baptize us with the rainbow hues
That bathe fair Heaven's dome,
And wreath thy richest garlands round
Our country and our home.

For what were life without
Thy sweet, entrancing, soothing balm.
What else but thee could compensate
The soul for griefs that come,
And storms that sweep in maddening rag
Our trembling being o'er,
Leaving the wreckage tossed and strewn
Upon a barren shore?

For when the soul is tempest tossed
Amid the breakers' roar,
'Tis Love points out the beacon lights
Along the distant shore.
Love whispers hope, "Hope sees a star,"
E'en when the mists are low,
And casts the sunshine on the cloud
Where smiles the welcome bow.

And "listening Love" hath caught the sound
Of angels' rustling wings,
And looks across the chasm of death.
Beyond earth's troublous things,
And sees again the golden chain
Of sympathy sublime,
Binding in one all kindred souls,
Eternity and time.

For height, nor depth, nor space, nor time,
Nor any powers that be,
Can separate the souls that love
Or keep thine own from thee.
Amid the eternal ways we stand
Where tempests fret and moan,
But e'en through death or what may come,
The soul shall claim its own.

LIBERTY

O Liberty! peace crowned and beautiful,
Fairest goddess conceived by mortal mind,
Or fashioned by human hand;
Standing where the waves triumphant lash the shore,
Thy light doth shine on sea and land forevermore.

Liberty, fairest gem in earth's bright galaxy!
In all the ages men have dreamed of thee,
And longed to clasp thee in a close embrace,
But ever hast thou held aloof from earth,
Waiting for a grander, nobler race to have its birth.

O Goddess fair! most holy and prophetic
Are the gleams that flash and stream
From the torch in thy majestic hand;

For promises are they that thou shalt one bright day
Come to this greed-cursed land, forevermore to stay.

Blest Liberty! when thou shalt reign triumphant,
Woman and man shall both be free—
None shall e'er more bear the name of slave,
And this the land of freedom's noble fame,
Shall be worthy its most illustrious name.

MY CASTLE

I built a castle grand and fair,
Whose turrets gleamed high in the air,
Then fancy on her shining wings
Bore me away in search of things
With which to decorate its walls,
And folks to promenade its halls.
I brought all that I held most dear,
My sad and lonely heart to cheer,
Placed him I loved upon its throne,
And called it all my very own.

One night there came an awful gale,
While we, all trembling, scared and pale,
Knelt down and tried to pray and trust
In God, and perish if we must.
And when 'twas o'er, my house, I found,
Was torn and tumbled to the ground;
My idols all had found a tomb
Beneath its ruin, wreck and gloom.

"Mourn not thy castle in the air,"
A voice spoke from I know not where.
"Its walls were frail and could not stand
The storms that blow o'er this strange land.

Take up the burden at thy door,
Toil on and count thyself not poor,
And when thou comest to yon bright hill
Rapture and joy thy soul shall fill."

I said then I shall cease to build,
Be passive where before I've willed,
And let supernal love suggest
That which for me will be the best.
O God! I cannot stand alone!
There's nothing that is all my own,
I'm part of one great Over Soul
Who doth my destiny control.

Then lo! upon a hill-crest bright,
Loomed a castle grand and white,
And the voice spoke gently as before,
Saying: "This shall stand forevermore.
Its marble walls and chambers vast
Were fashioned in the eternal past,
And all that round thy soul doth cling,
To this fair temple thou shalt bring.
The house of air, see why it fell?
That thou shouldst come to this to dwell."

IT IS COMING

It is coming, it is coming!
I can sense it in the air,
Hear it like the distant thunder
Rumbling, grumbling everywhere.
'Tis the fast-approaching crisis
Of the question deep and grave,
'Tis the final grand encounter
Twixt the master and the slave.

Toilers bending 'neath their burdens,
Giving lifeblood for a crust,
Strike for better terms and wages,
Asking never half what's just;
Then old solid corporation,

With his millions at command,
Coolly contemplates their action—
Knows they'll lose on every hand.

Then come days of anxious waiting,
Hungry children cry for bread,
Men wrought up to desperation
Vow 'twere better to be dead.
And the public, long forbearing,
Suffer while the war is waged
'Twixt the money lords and rulers
And the toilers bound and caged.

Can they hope to win the battle?
No! for gold alone is king.
Labor's arm when 'gainst it pitted
Falls a weak and helpless thing,
And the daily press and pulpit,
Throttled by the powers of gold,
Give the thrust to honest labor
And the cause of greed uphold.

Judging by these object lessons,
Something soon must come to pass;
While the world is filled with plenty
Thousands starve to death, alas!
All the sturdy, honest-handed
Millions robbed of hard-earned gains
Meekly bow to old wage master
And submit to wear their chains?

No! a thousand times, no, never!
Not while coursing through our veins

Runs the blood that bathed "Old Glory"
On a thousand battle plains.
From the factory, mill and workshop,
From the farm and forge and mine
We will join the strike for freedom
And will float its grand ensign.

In one broad phalanx, the people
Will march forth with certain tread
And will wrench from corporations
Their means of earning bread.
Thus the question will be settled,
Not with cannon or flintlocks,
But by peaceful, wise decision,
At the bloodless ballot box.

MY CHURCH

My church embraces all
Of this great pulsing world.
Every color, race and tribe,
Bond and free, rich and poor alike
Are welcome at its shrine.
Its altars fair are human hearts,
From whose sacred fires of love
Holy incense eternally ascends.
Its priest is the inner self or soul
That speaks face to face with God,
Its holy place where'er you chance to be
On sea or land, in palace grand or cot.
Its baptismal fount the mighty sea of love,
Whose waters must immerse each soul,
Else it cannot be redeemed.

SONGS

NEVER ALONE

I'm never alone by day nor by night,
For ever around me are angels of light,
They brighten my pathway and teach me to do
The work of the noble, good and the true.

Chorus—

Never alone, no never alone,
Though my pillow may be of down or of stone,
In my dreams come sweet visions of faces so fair,
And palaces grand of my home over there.

Though the days may be darkened by sorrow and pain,
I know that the sun will shine soon again,
For no day is so dark but they whisper to me
Of light just beyond, that my eyes cannot see.

Chorus—Never alone, etc.

They remove from my path every thistle and thorn,
And with beautiful flowers my pathway adorn;
They walk by my side with love's banner unfurled,
As I journey along through this sorrowful world.

Chorus--Never alone, etc.

MY FLOWERET

In the cold damp earth we laid him,
And left him there alone,
While the winds that swept the prairies

Did moan, and moan, and moan;
And we wept that one so lovely
Like the floweret and the leaf,
Or the rainbow tinted morning
Should have a life so brief.

And as I turned me homeward
My heart was sick and sore,
For I thought a flower had faded
To bloom, no, nevermore;
And the wind among the branches
Sang this requiem o'er and o'er:
Thou art gone, art gone, my darling,
I shall see thee nevermore.

But an angel softly whispered:
Thy darling is not dead,
Nor in the far-off mansions,
But with thee now instead;
And my faint heart caught the whisper
And it stayed the troubled tide,
For I knew my sainted baby
Was standing by my side;

That the flower so early gathered
Bloomed on another plain,
And what had been our own loss
Was his eternal gain;
That the floweret was transplanted
On the bright celestial shore,
To grow and bloom in beauty
In God's garden evermore.

O Sea of Love, with infinite trust,
I bathe my soul in thee,
And know that the law, unfailing and just,
Will bear my own to me.

I KNOW NOT

I know not what the morrow may bring,
I may sorrow and weep, or rejoicing may sing;
But this I do know, that whatever my lot
I'm a part and power of the Infinite thought.

Refrain—

I know not the hour, I know not the day,
When the angels shall bear my spirit away;
Yet in earth or in heaven, where'er I may be,
I'll be drawn to the sphere that's best fitted for me.

I know not sometimes what course I should take,
And failures seem scattered along my wake;
But this I do know, I cannot fall,
For I rest in the arms of the Infinite All.

The law that governs the sparrows' flight,
Denounces the wrong and upholds the right,
My wandering bark will surely guide
As I'm tossed upon life's foaming tide.

I know not if the Master shall say
Thy work is well done. Come over the way.
But this I do know, that in doing my best
I may safely leave to his keeping the rest.

THE VOICE OF THE SOUL

I'm told of a country just over the sea,
A land of perennial bloom,
Where the soul from all sorrow and pain shall be free,
Beyond the dark shades of the tomb.
Where the wayworn of earth may stay and take rest,

Where the traveler will reach his goal,
The city of light in the land of the blest,
The Jerusalem of the soul.

Chorus—

I cannot say if these things be true.
Mine eyes have not seen them, I own,
But something within ever whispers to me
Of joys beyond what I have known.

I'm told of a Father of infinite love,
Who knows me and answers my prayer,
And that I can never, no, not if I would,
Drift out and away from his care;
That He notices even the sparrow's fall,
And hears the young raven's cry;
That nothing is lost to this Infinite All—
Not even a tear or a sigh.

Chorus—

I cannot say if these things be true;
Mine eyes have not seen Him, I own,
But my soul reaches up to the fountain of life
For joys beyond what I have known.

And so I just rest in the happy belief
That somehow, sometime and some place,
My craving of soul will be satisfied,
Though I never behold His face.
Then let me come unto His house and be clothed,
And drink of His rich flowing bowl,
Oh, let me sit down at the banquet with Him,
And feed my poor famishing soul.

SCHOOL MEMORIES

'Mong Missouri's rugged Ozarks
Stands a schoolhouse mean and old,
Where the leaves in mild October
Turn to scarlet, brown and gold.
During months of fall and winter
Many children gathered there:
Boys with hearts both brave and loyal,
Girls with faces fond and fair.

Chorus—

O those days so bright and fair!
How my thoughts still linger there,
While on memory's page I trace
One sweet, tender, girlish face.

When I played or when I studied,
Sweet brown eyes looked into mine,
Though my boyish heart was wayward,
Yet I worshiped at her shrine.
O the thrill that stirred my being
As with looks so swift and sly,
'Cross the room when others saw not
Flashed love's glance from eye to eye.

Years have passed, and leaves are falling
On the old playground today,
But a face and form have vanished
From those hills and dales away,
For the angels took my darling
Where sweet love is law and rule,
And she now recites her lessons
In a higher, better school.

In Spirit Land she waits for me,
Where angels flutter glad and free,
Time nor change can e'er efface
The memory of her loving face.

BABY DONALD

Oh, Baby Don, since thou hast spoken
From out the mists, from out the gloom,
The dismal spell of death is broken
And golden sunshine gilds the tomb.
Oh, how I've hungered broken-hearted,
How searched the space with weary eyes,
Since by your little bed we parted,
For a message from beyond the skies.

I saw your blue eyes closed forever,
Your pulseless hands clasped on your breast,
To thrill with life again no never,
And saw you laid to rest, to rest.
How your childlike, perfect beauty,
Pained my overburdened heart,
As I saw it lowered earthward,
Back to clay saw it depart.

But I'm sure my baby liveth.
I've heard him speak. I've seen his face.
I know that God the Father giveth
Each of His little lambs a place.
I know that this world simply fadeth
Out into that that lies beyond—
Beyond the mists, where there awaiteth
All those of whom we are so fond.

LINES TO LENA

An August flower that blossoms
Among the Ozark hills
Of Missouri, with her songbirds,
Her waving trees and rills—
A flower of wondrous beauty
That ever since its birth
Hath scattered fragrant perfume
To purify the earth.

GERTRUDE AND GERALDINE

In the Springtime of my life,
While yet the flush of girlhood rouged my cheek,
From out the unfathomable past
You came forth unto me, my children dear.
And oh, what joy, what mystery
Were folded up within your babyhood!
Warm and soft, and precious as my life,
I pressed you to my bosom in ecstatic delight,
Gertrude and Geraldine.

And every day since then I have thanked
The giver of all good things for you.
Looking through the mists of futurity
He must have seen how much I should need you;
For in the strange, changeful life I've led
You two have stood like beacon lights
Upon the shore of my earthly existence,
Gertrude and Geraldine.

Or like angels of light, I have beheld you,
Whose fair white hands have reached me,
No matter where I have wandered.
Bereft of all in life but you, dear ones,
I have lived for you, worked for you,
And have borne you each day, my loves,
To the holy shrine of thanksgiving and prayer,
And there have met with God,
Gertude and Geraldine.

You have been my anchor in storm,
My lighth in darkness, and my hope;
My comfort, my inspiration, my counselors and guides.
Your little white hands pressed into mine,
In confidence, love and trust,
Have taught me the meaning of faith and trust in God,
Gertrude and Geraldine.

Wondrous nature, book divine,
May thy lessons grand entwine,
Like sweet tendrils 'round my heart
And deep holiness impart.
Let thy inspiration true
Point the course I should pursue
And thy laws of truth and right
Guide me on to realms of light.

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